

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that has reached crisis levels in many Native American communities: the Federal funding shortfalls crippling tribal law enforcement and justice systems.

Native American families, like all families, deserve safe and secure communities. Tragically, there is a pervasive sense of lawlessness in too many areas of Indian country. As the at-large Member of Congress for South Dakota, I am proud to represent nine sovereign native nations.

The Federal Government has a unique relationship with the 562 federally recognized tribes. This government-to-government relationship is established in the U.S. Constitution, is recognized through treaties and is reaffirmed through executive orders, judicial decisions and congressional action.

Law enforcement is one of the Federal Government's trust obligations to tribes. Yet, on many counts, we are failing to meet that obligation. Less than 3,000 law enforcement officers patrol more than 56 million acres of Indian country. Let me repeat: 3,000 officers for 56 million acres. That reflects less than one half of the law enforcement presence in comparable rural communities.

A recent master plan for justice services in Indian country found that crime is increasing. The report notes that drug cartels deliberately base their operations in Indian country because of the lack of law enforcement. Once drug producers gain a foothold in reservations, they can sell drugs throughout the United States. Drug trafficking demonstrates that weak tribal law enforcement systems are not just a problem for Indian country; they affect us all.

In addition to drug activity, the rates of crime against women are staggering. In June 2007, Amnesty International released their report, entitled "Maze of Injustice," which documents what native women have long known before and have fought against. The figures suggest that 34 percent of native women will be raped in their lifetimes. Even more women will be victims of domestic violence. When tribal law enforcement departments are understaffed, there are delays in responding to victims and to collecting evidence.

At a 2007 Natural Resources Committee field hearing, we heard from Georgia Little Shield, director of the Pretty Bird Woman House on the Standing Rock Reservation, which was named in honor of a Lakota woman who was brutally raped and murdered in that community.

Ms. Little Shield told of a woman who was beaten by her partner and who had called her for help in filing a police report. They called the police and were told, when an officer becomes available, he would take her statement. After 2 hours of waiting, they called again. The one officer on duty had been

sent to the scene of a traffic accident. After waiting 2 more hours, they called yet again. In the end, the police officer never came to take her statement.

Large land-based reservations are hit especially hard by insufficient funding. For example, the Cheyenne River Sioux tribal chairman has testified that his tribe has only three officers per shift to cover an area almost the size of Connecticut. These situations and statistics show that the extent of these problems far exceed the level of appropriations.

I applaud the interior appropriations subcommittee Chairman NORMAN DICKS and the entire Appropriations Committee for increasing tribal law enforcement and justice funding by \$28.7 million from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2008. However, we have much more to do.

In 2004, the Interior Department Inspector General reported on the deteriorating conditions of tribal detention facilities. Four years later, not much has changed.

Last month, the BIA jail in Pine Ridge, South Dakota was closed for safety reasons after years of insufficient maintenance by the Federal Government. It's estimated that the tribal detention system alone will require \$8.4 billion to address our current deficiencies.

In conclusion, fully funding tribal law enforcement will not fix every problem such as the lack of transparency and accountability at the BIA. That is why I am proud to sponsor the Tribal Law and Order Act. This act was written by Senator DORGAN, chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee in the Senate. I look forward to working with him to ensure the bill becomes law.

The immediate challenge facing tribes is the insufficient Federal funds that leads to too few officers, to jails too unsafe for inmates and staff and to tribal courts nearly overwhelmed with caseloads.

Let me say again: Native American families, like all families, deserve to raise their children and to live their lives with a basic sense of security and safety. Congress must meet our trust responsibilities by fully funding tribal law enforcement and justice systems.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAYNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HONDA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the Speaker for his recognition, and I thank the minority leader for yielding the time for me to speak on such an important issue this evening.